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THE ROOF OF THE WORLD. By H. G. Barnett. Boston: Sherman, French and Company.

The fluency of the poet, the ready lilt through which he beguiles the reader, perhaps puts the latter on his guard. Stirred is the uneasy consciousness that this is that fluency classically described as "fatal." With the song of the open road, the facile beat of rhyme, must go the lyric cry of glad *insouciance* and the note of passionate utterance. Alas! that we do not find them here. The cry is thin and reedy; no passion sounds here its deep-toned diapason. This poet surely takes his ease in his own verse—there is neither the chisel of the classicist, not the challenge of the romanticist in these, now simply pretty, now exotically labyrinthine, rhymes.

There is something which smacks of the amateur workman in this persistent recitation of the conventional writhings of the pythonesse, the solemn incubation of the astronomical figures and coruscating zodiacal signs. The wine is too dilute to give us that spell of wizardry that George Sterling so strangely gave us. In such verbal fancies as the "The Higher Perspective" one finds little joy:—

He sees white constellations
Like vitreous bulbs out-blown,
And crimson galaxies emerge
From starry vortices that surge,
Casting up spheres of stone. [Etc., etc.]

In the least ambitious of these poems, those in which Mr. Barnett makes no pretentious effort to dazzle his readers with a dazzling heap of recondite words,—imperfectly intelligible,—a happy effect is often created. Such is the poem which gives the volume its title; on the opening lines of "The Shallop," which sounds like a child's lullaby:—

The earth is like a shallop
That rides the solar sea,
Her speed a comet's gallop,
Her mainsails broad and free.

She cleaves the silent billows
And gallantly she rides,
The Queen of All Flotillas
The pearl of All the Tides.

This poet, whose pleasing success is all too readily won, should seek his development along several clear paths. Intensification of feeling will greatly strengthen and stiffen the light verse. Simplicity of utterance, the search for the just word, the fit phrase, which so often find their rationale in simplicity—is the great desideratum. Order is better than chaos; a small, clear current is preferable to a confused maelstrom. A. H.

CHRONICLES OF THE CAPE FEAR RIVER. 1660-1916. By James Sprunt. Second Edition. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co. \$4.00.

The American research worker abroad is at once struck by the enormous number of local histories—county, departmental, parish or town—which he finds in the catalogues of the chief libraries. Of local histories in America, outside of New England, we have woefully few. Yet it is impossible to write accurate and enduring state or national history without the foundation of this local and antiquarian information. James Sprunt has made, in this respect, a notable contribution to the history of North Carolina, and to that of the Union at large, in this handsome and well-printed book of nearly seven hundred and fifty pages, illustrated with six maps.

After reviewing the geography, archæology, fauna and flora of the Cape Fear district, Mr. Sprunt passes on to colonial life. In his account of the Revolution it is the personal and social factors which chiefly engage his attention. Much of the book is, indeed, biographical. The reader will be chiefly interested in the two chapters devoted to the Civil War. Wilmington was the centre of blockade running, and the last important port remaining to the Confederacy. To these facts Mr. Sprunt has not failed to do full justice, and his very full account of the blockade runners and of their adventures constitutes the best part of the book. Considerable space is also accorded to the military operations, involving the siege and capture of Fort Fisher, and the occupation of Wilmington. The last third of the book forms a complete history of Wilmington; its trade and commerce, schools, churches, and other institutions. The index embraces over four thousand entries, and will thus prove especially valuable to historical workers and genealogists. S. L. WARE.